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SUMMER'S GOLD
By Hanson Puthuff

Development of Landscape Painting in California

By EVERETT CARROLL MAXWELL

IT appears that there is no royal road to success in the field of art. Genius and toil still go hand in hand, and their way is dark and steep. In spite of the restless spirit that beats at the bars of academic methods, we are forced to admit that art is evolution and not revolution.

A few years ago the editor of the FINE ARTS JOURNAL, desirous of fostering an interest in western art, opened to me these columns and I endeavored to review in nine installments the entire development of landscape painting in the southwest. In space so limited, and with a subject so broad and fertile, it was impossible to delve deeply. As I scan these pages which are before me I feel that I touched only the high lights of my theme, leaving the foundation color dull and undeveloped. For the benefit of those who

followed my brief discussions, I am bound at this time to draw a few comparisons that are almost as startling to myself as they may be to the student, and even to the painters under consideration.

I am convinced that students of art in America have missed a source of interesting study by neglecting to follow the trend of art on the Pacific Coast. This is partly due to the isolation of this sunset land from art centers of the east and middle west. Yet there has been much willful neglect, and in order to clear the vision a profound research will eventually be necessary on the part of the apathetic. Regard me as a false prophet, a charlatan, or even a bouffon, but let me go down on record as the author of the statement that out of this land of golden light and purple shadows, of silent spaces and eloquent vistas will come an



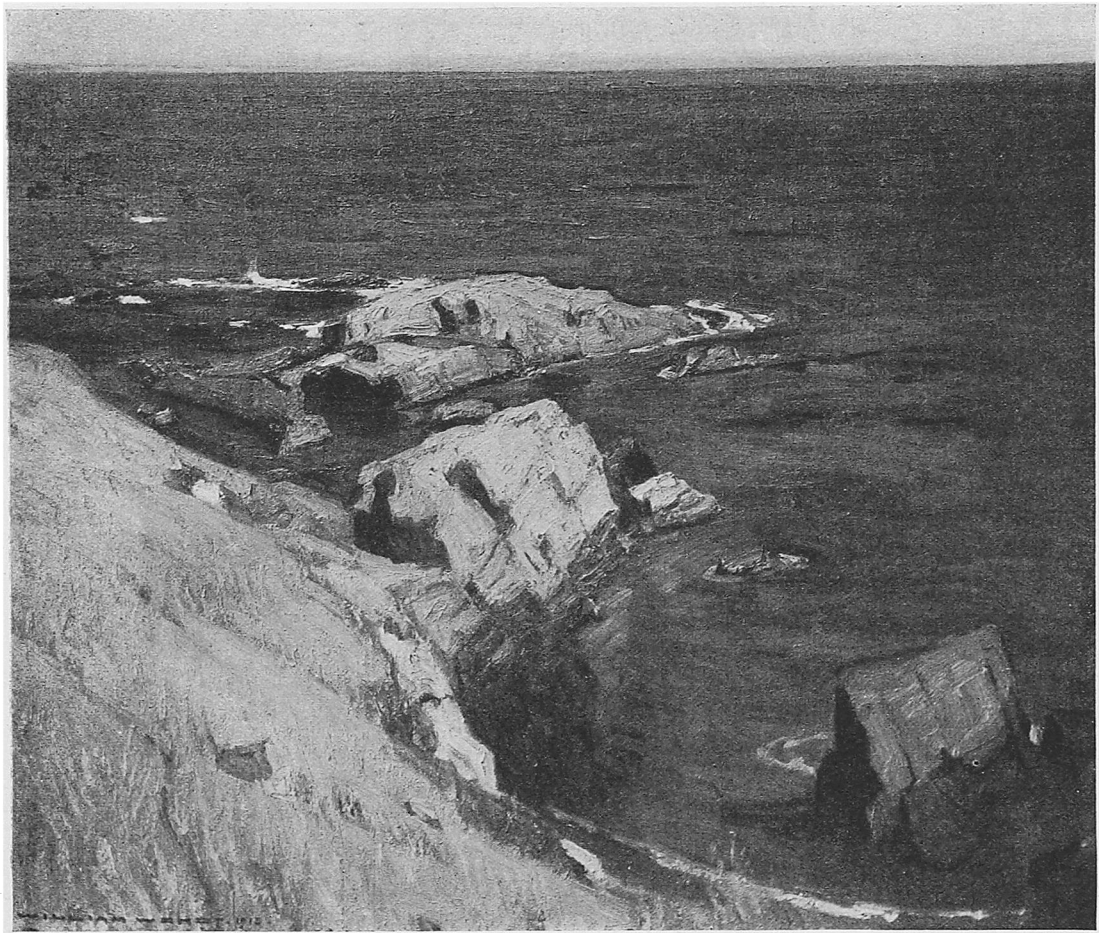
EVENING LIGHT
By Gardner Symons

individual art, as strong, as vital and as colorful as the soil from which it sprung. I have even made this statement in the face of conditions which lead others to grave doubt. Yet to the far-sighted I believe the final result is apparent. Because the struggle has been single-handed and the effort scattered renders the fight one of vast interest. It may be a shock and a surprise to many when I state, as truth forces me to do, that conditions have never been so unsettled, the development so halting, or the general trend so encouraging as at the present time. A strange paradox, you must admit; but one that we cannot escape, for facts will bear me out.

My point of observation is unusually advantageous and my deep interest, both personal and professional, renders comparisons

virtually easy, if somewhat reluctant. If I may be permitted to take for my basis of argument the collection comprising the Sixth Annual Exhibition of the California Art Club recently shown in Los Angeles, I will have little difficulty proving my point.

In referring to the California Art Club it is only fair to the painters in San Francisco and vicinity to explain that this club, whose home is in Los Angeles, is composed almost wholly of Southern California artists. Since its organization it has developed under the able guidance of Mr. William Wendt and his associates and now occupies a place in the educational life of the southwest that merits our utmost consideration. While there are a number of strong painters in and near Los Angeles who are not identified with the move-



THE SILENT SUMMER SEA
By William Wendt

ment, so large a majority have become members that we feel justified in referring to the Annual Exhibition of the Club as more or less criterion.

The personnel of the California Art Club is about evenly divided between professional artists and a coterie of younger workers who make the painting of pictures an avocation. Two years ago I would have declared that the trend of these men's work pointed to a unified effort to establish a group of realistic landscapists. Today no such tendency is apparent. The unity of their exhibitions have given place to experiment, and where once we found a sameness of subject and likeness of handling we now note an honest striving for individuality. The healthy influence of a few accepted leaders has left its mark, but is far less

evident than ever before. The canvases are smaller and more general in character. This fact is vastly significant.

Anyone may hum a delightful little tune, yet be utterly incapable of singing a full lay. Many of our strong workers are represented by one or two small studies, where usually they occupied the line with a goodly number of gallery canvases. Experiments are to be seen on every hand and many of these are highly successful and give promise of brilliant fulfillment in the near future. This may be applied literally to the small canvases of Cora Cowan, Helen E. Coan, Theodore B. Modra, J. Duncan Gleason, Xarifa Towner, Helen Louise Kohlmeier, M. Boening Kendall, Walter Lewis Cheever, Lawrence M. Murphy and Kathryn W. Leighton.

MOTHER AND CHILD
By Henrietta M. Shore



From this general group justice demands that I single out the work of Walter L. Cheever and give it more than a passing thought. Mr. Cheever is young. This fact is vastly in his favor, for he is ambitious. His two offerings are figure studies—one, an interior describing a group of people seated about a pleasant dinner table. The composition has been hopelessly impaired by introducing a heavy dark molding which runs around the wall parallel with the frame in the upper portion of the canvas and gives the unpleasant effect of crowding the remainder of the picture to the bottom of the canvas. Beyond this, the picture has idea and individuality and

is charming in color. "Blue and Gold," Mr. Cheever's second offering, is a head study of considerable distinction. Neither of these canvases are finished works of art, but I am bound to consider them on account of their honest intention. J. Duncan Gleason may not be pleased with my classification of his work, and if he demands to stand by himself I can readily grant that, as illustrations, his "Coast of Laguna" and "In Strange Waters" would add beauty and mystery to any tale of the sea.

Anna H. Hills, William Lees Judson, Marie Johnson, A. B. Titus, Louis Hovey Sharp, F. W. Cuprien and Fernand Lungren may be classed with the solid academic workers who

have not yet been violently inoculated with the new spirit in art. Yet at the same time I can begin to detect a certain subtle change in their work. It may not be apparent on the canvas. No doubt it is still a condition of the mind, but the feeling is there.

Take, for example, that colorful canvas "Evening Light," by Gardner Symons. It is as thoroughly realistic as nature itself, and yet it is a poem in color. Its feeling is as elemental as is this artist's want: yet he soothes with a tenderness that is one of the mysteries of the sunset and the sea. William Wendt's most important offering is a large marine called "Silent Summer Sea." Aside from a certain meagerness of composition and general treatment, it is one of this able painter's most advanced works. Jean Mannheim, who always amazes us by his dexterity, exhibits a striking portrait of a young man, and C. P. Townsley shows three figure compositions, all painted in a spirited manner and strongly marked by the growing tendency toward characterization rather than delineation. Hanson Puthuff is well represented by three delightful landscape studies, all of which are freely handled and fresh in color. "Summer Gold" is perhaps the most pleasing of the trio. Yet I believe that the artist has gone further in the canvas called "Spring Showers." Mr. Puthuff loves color and he is rapidly becoming an expert colorist. I sincerely hope that he will not be tempted to play with color to the detriment of other equally essential qualities. Carl Oscar Borg shows three small studies painted in Egypt. These will appeal to lovers of good technique and logical art appreciation. Borg is not easily carried away by new ideas and his work remains free from modern invasions.

The work of Guy Rose, French in feeling, yea, even unto Monet, deserves special mention, as does also that of Maurice Braun, Max Wiecsorek, Bessie E. Hazen, John W. Rich and William V. Cahill. A. E. Kilpatrick and Benjamin C. Brown were not well represented, and the names of several of the strong-

est members of the club were conspicuously absent from the catalogue. None of last year's prize winners were represented, which seems a strange coincident.

And now the modernists are upon us. Donna Schuster, Anne M. Bremer, Henry Varmann Poor, Helen Blum, Sidney Dale Shaw, Bert Cressey, Henrietta M. Shore and Meta S. Cressey. Quite a cohort, my masters, for one little club in the far southwest to uphold; and just here let it be said to the credit of the jury and the hanging committee that the work of these modernists was greeted with an open mind and given the utmost consideration, even when it was evident that the canvases submitted appeared strange indeed to some of the older workers.

Of the revolutionists in American art there are two groups—those who have studied with Henri and those who have not. The majority of the above-mentioned have, I think, either studied under Mr. Henri or have been directly influenced by his advanced methods. Of this group, Henrietta Shore is easily the best. Miss Shore tempers her pigment with intelligence and understanding, and brings to her work an acute knowledge of psychology as well as a sound technique, a thorough art training and rare artistic perception. Her exceptional canvas, called "Mother and Child," is unquestionably one of the real gems of the exhibition. The envelopment of the figures is subtly yet convincingly accomplished, and the whole ensemble is far in advance of the usual experimental canvas. The work of this new group gives us all food for thought and is bound to extend its influence, either directly or indirectly, in our furrowed field of local art.

Summing up the general aspect of the exhibition as a whole, I see a decided advance over previous conditions, and, strange as it may appear, I feel the new note in some degree in almost every canvas shown, although few, if any, of these workers have had an opportunity to observe the work of the extreme modernists in the hotbeds of the European art centers, where new schools are springing up over night.